

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4411
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BELIZE
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
HQ SOUTHCOM SCJ-2

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 3008

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, PGOV, GT, BH, UK
SUBJ: VISIT OF GUATEMALAN VICE PRESIDENT MARIO SANDOVAL.

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1. SUMMARY. GUATEMALAN VICE PRESIDENT SANDOVAL ARACON VISITED URUGUAY JULY 31 TO AUGUST 3, MEETING WITH THE URUGUAYAN PRESIDENT, FOREIGN MINISTER, AND COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES. THE ONLY PUBLIC COMMENTS ON BELIZE MADE BY URUGUAYAN OFFICIALS WERE A STATEMENT CONFIDENTIAL

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BY PRESIDENT MENDEZ WHICH NOTED URUGUAY'S SOLIDARITY WITH GUATEMALA, AND ANOTHER CAREFULLY HEDGED COMMENT BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAYING THAT URUGUAY HAS SUPPORTED GUATEMALA FOR SOME TIME ON THE QUESTION OF BELIZE. END SUMMARY.

2. GUATEMALAN VICE PRESIDENT SANDOVAL ALARCON, UNDER SECRETARY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS ALFREDO OBIOLS GOMEZ, AND

GENERAL ANGEL GUEVARA RODRIGUEZ, VISITED URUGUAY FOR 72 HOURS FROM JULY 31 TO AUGUST 3. THE GUATEMALAN DELEGATION MET WITH PRESIDENT MENDEZ, FOREIGN MINISTER ROVIRA, THE COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES, AND MADE THE USUAL PROTOCOLARY ROUNDS. THERE WAS NO JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AND THE ONLY PUBLIC STATEMENT MADE BY URUGUAYAN OFFICIALS REGARDING THE BELIZE CONTROVERSY WAS A GUARDED ONE BY PRESIDENT MENDEZ AFTER BEING DECORATED BY THE GUATEMALANS. MENDEZ NOTED URUGUAY'S SOLIDARITY WITH GUATEMALA AND WISHED IT SUCCESS IN ITS CLAIMS TO INCORPORATE BELIZE INTO ITS TERRITORY.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER ROVIRA, UPON BEING QUESTIONED BY REPORTERS, WOULD ONLY SAY THAT HE HAD LISTENED TO THE VISITORS' POINT OF VIEW ON BELIZE, ADDING THAT URUGUAY HAD SUPPORTED GUATEMALA FOR SOME TIME ON THE QUESTION OF BELIZE. THE MINISTER, HOWEVER, MADE NO COMMENT REGARDING THE PRESENT SITUATION.

4. IN A PRESS INTERVIEW THE GUATEMALAN UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS WENT BACK OVER 150 YEARS OF HISTORY IN AN ATTEMPT TO SHOW THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE GUATEMALAN POSITION. HE STATED THAT WITH THE EXCEPTION OF CUBA, MEXICO AND PANAMA, GUATEMALA'S POSITION ON BELIZE IS ACCEPTED BY ALL LATIN AMERICAN NATIONS. ASKED IF THERE COULD BE MEDIATION OF THE QUESTION AT THIS TIME, OBOLIS
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WAS QUOTED AS SAYING "THE MEDIATION OF THE UNITED STATES, PERHAPS THAT WHICH MOST COULD INFLUENCE ENGLAND, WAS NOT PRODUCTIVE NOR ACCEPTED BY LONDON."

5. SANDOVAL ALARCON, IN A SEPARATE INTERVIEW, WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT "OUR GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED THAT THE RIGHTS OF BELIZE WILL BE RESPECTED THROUGH THE MEANS WHICH ARE NECESSARY, INCLUDING WAR." HE ALSO NOTED THAT HE HAD RECEIVED "TOTAL SUPPORT" FOR THE GUATEMALAN POSITION ON BELIZE ON HIS TOUR OF VARIOUS AMERICAN CAPITALS AND "THE SUPPORT WHICH WE HAVE OBTAINED IN BOLIVIA, CHILE AND ARGENTINA WAS GREATER THAN WE THOUGHT WE WOULD RECEIVE. THE THREE COUNTRIES HAVE OFFERED VOLUNTEERS TO FIGHT ALONGSIDE THE GUATEMALAN ARMY, IN CASE WE HAVE TO GO TO THIS EXTREME."
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6. COMMENT: DURING THE COURSE OF THE AMBASSADOR'S AUGUST 3 CALL ON THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO PRESENT COPIES OF HIS CREDENTIALS, THE FOREIGN MINISTER COMMENTED WITH RESPECT TO THE SANDOVAL VISIT THAT QUESTIONS OF SUPPORT OF

THIS NATURE WERE DIFFICULT TO RESOLVE WITHIN THE GOU
BECAUSE OF THE PRESENT DIFFUSION OF AUTHORITY. THEREFORE,
THE MINISTER SAID THAT ABOUT ALL THE GOU COULD DO DURING
THE SANDOVAL VISIT WAS CAREFULLY TO HEDGE ITS COMMITMENTS
AND TO PRESENT THE VICE PRESIDENT'S VIEWS AND REQUEST FOR
SUPPORT UP THROUGH THE POWER STRUCTURE. IN A SEPARATE
COMMENT TO THE DCM, THE SUB-DIRECTOR OF PROTOCOL SAID THAT
THE ENTIRE ATMOSPHERE SURROUNDING THE VISIT WAS SOURED BY
AN ARTICLE WHICH APPEARED IN "LE MONDE" ON JULY 16. ACCORDING
TO THE SUB-DIRECTOR, THE ARTICLE WAS AN INTERVIEW WITH VICE
PRESIDENT SANDOVAL IN WHICH THE LATTER EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT
THE ONLY WAY TO TREAT SUBVERSIVES WAS TO ADOPT METHODS
HARSHER THAN THOSE USED BY THEM. IN OTHER WORDS, CRUSH THEM.
THE VICE PRESIDENT IS ALSO REPORTED TO HAVE QUOTED URUGUAYAN
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GENERAL LUIS QUEIROLO, NOW HEAD OF THE URUGUAYAN MILITARY
MISSION IN WASHINGTON, AS SAYING THAT HIS COUNTRY HAD BEEN
INSPIRED BY THE GUATEMALAN EXAMPLE IN COMBATTING SUBVERSION.
UNDER THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES HERE, AND PARTICULARLY AS
RELATES TO URUGUAY'S IMAGE ABROAD ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES,
THIS REPORTED INTERVIEW WAS GREETED HERE WITH EXTREME DIS-
APPROVAL BY GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES AND THE MILITARY.
IT APPEARS THAT THEY WERE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE
REPERCUSSIONS IN THE U.S., ESPECIALLY BECAUSE OF THE
STATEMENT ALLEGEDLY MADE BY GENERAL QUEIROLO.
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